

COVID-19 Bulletin

 Southcoast Health

Exclusively for the employees
of Southcoast Health

Good afternoon, Southcoast colleagues.

Mandatory 14-day quarantine for travelers entering Massachusetts

COVID-19 Order No. 45 issued as July 24, 2020 Travel Order authorized by Governor Baker

On June 30, 2020, Governor Baker announced updated travel guidelines that instruct those traveling or returning to Massachusetts to self-quarantine for 14 days. Those guidelines were further amended on July 24, 2020 to become **effective August 1, 2020.**

Under the current guidelines, those traveling or returning to Massachusetts are instructed to self-quarantine for 14 days. There are two exceptions under the guidelines: (1) the guidance does not apply to travelers from Rhode Island, Connecticut, Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, New York or New Jersey; and (2) for “essential critical infrastructure workers” traveling to Massachusetts for work purposes.

While the federal government generally defines “essential critical infrastructure workers” to include healthcare and public health personnel, please be aware that **personal travel to Massachusetts or return to Massachusetts following personal travel does not satisfy the “for work purposes” requirement of the second exception.**

Rather than self-quarantine for 14 days, travelers have the option to present a negative test performed not longer than 72 hours before the person’s arrival in Massachusetts (and must be able to produce proof of such test upon

request). All individuals traveling or returning to Massachusetts must complete and retain a Massachusetts Travel Form. Failure to comply with the travel restrictions order may result in a fine of \$500 per day or may be enforced by way of an injunction.

Links to the relevant guidance can be found below:

- [July 24, 2020 Order regarding Travel Restrictions](#)
- [Press Release regarding Announcement of Travel Restrictions \(pre-August 1\)](#)
- [Guidance regarding Travel to Massachusetts](#)
- [Guidance regarding Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers](#)

CDC-issued statement regarding international travel

Currently, all international locations are classified as “Level 3” (widespread ongoing transmission with or without restrictions on entry to the U.S., depending on the location) and the CDC is recommending all nonessential international travel be avoided. Any individuals traveling internationally are recommended to stay home for 14 days from their date of return to the U.S. and take certain steps to monitor their health and practice social distancing (including staying home from work and school and avoiding contact with others).

Southcoast strongly advises that employees avoid personal travel internationally and to domestic hotspots unless absolutely necessary.

This is especially important for those employees who are deemed essential and work on site, as the Massachusetts mandatory 14-day quarantine will unnecessarily strain critical operations and potentially impact patient care.

Further guidance on employee travel is attached in a Frequently Asked Questions document so that employees understand its applicability at Southcoast Health.

Recovered patients do not require retesting within 3-month period

On July 17, the CDC updated their testing guidelines for patients who had been confirmed as COVID positive but are considered to be “Recovered” because the patient was at least 10 days from the onset of symptoms and no longer symptomatic.

Please note: Any COVID positive patient who has suffered severe to critical illness must be at least 20 days from onset of symptoms and no longer symptomatic to be considered “Recovered.” Recovered patients can continue to test positive for 12 weeks following the onset of their symptoms. The recommendation is not to retest Recovered patients prior to 3 months after their original onset of symptoms or their positive test date.

As a result, for any Southcoast patient who has a “Recovered” banner appear in EPIC AND the patient is asymptomatic, we will not be testing/retesting prior to admission, surgery or a procedure.

The Recovered patient, as long as they remain asymptomatic, would be treated as COVID negative for the purposes of inpatient/observation bed placement. In addition, all staff and providers (in our hospital and/or in our ambulatory settings) would follow the COVID negative patient algorithm for PPE utilization.

For patients who have an order placed by infection prevention order:

COVID-19 RECOVERED STATUS Last updated: 07/30/20 1334

Patient met criteria to be considered in 'recovered' status from COVID-19 on 7/30/2020 1:34 PM. Patient does not need to be retested for COVID-19 for 3 months unless symptoms return.

LAST COVID-19 RESULT AND DATE Last updated: 07/30/20 1334

Last final COVID-19 result at Southcoast was NEGATIVE. Result Date: 7/15/2020

For patients who do not have the order placed but it has been at least 24 days since their first positive or the date the infection was added:

COVID-19 RECOVERED STATUS	Last updated: 07/30/20 1328 ⬆
24 days have passed since the patient's onset of COVID-19 and the patient can be considered 'Recovered'. Patient does not need to be retested for COVID-19 for 3 months unless symptoms return	
LAST COVID-19 RESULT AND DATE	Last updated: 07/30/20 1328 ⬆
Last final COVID-19 result at Southcoast was NEGATIVE. Result Date: 7/27/2020	

The Recovered patients banner will automatically terminate after 12 weeks and be automatically removed from the patients record. When there is no Recovered banner visible, the indication is to test/retest the patient prior to admission, surgery or a procedure, and whenever appropriate/necessary in the ambulatory setting.

The Recovered patient banner will automatically terminate after 12 weeks, causing the banner to be completely removed from the patient medical record. When a Recovered banner is not visible, the indication is to test/retest the patient prior to admission, surgery or a procedure, and to test/retest whenever clinically appropriate in the ambulatory setting.

- [Link to CDC on updated recommendations on Duration of Isolation and Precautions for Adults with COVID-19](#)

Reminder: Eye protection

Key Information:

- Eye protection is essential in preventing transmission of COVID-19 from patient-to-staff and from staff-to-staff.
- Clinicians and caregivers should wear either Face Shields or Goggles in order to protect their eyes, which can be a portal of entry for possible infection. Eyeglasses are not sufficient protection.
- Face Shields have the added benefit of preventing the wearer from inadvertently touching their face or their face mask.

Recommendations:

- Eye protection should be worn when within 6 feet of contact with **ANY PATIENT**.
 - Eye protection is not needed when there is an environmental barrier or ability to maintain 6 feet (social distancing criteria).
 - Face Shields and Goggles should be cleaned with a disinfecting wipe between use with any patients.
 - If the Face Shields or Goggles are beginning to show signs of excess wear, please call Supply Room for replacements items.
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Update: Lab appointments

As Southcoast phases out Clockwise for lab appointments and adopts the Cadence system – while at the same time navigating the challenges of our “new normal” – we have received multiple reports of patient frustration with wait times and other issues.

Thank you to staff for working with patients on site to address these concerns, and please know that Southcoast is striving to improve the process online and in our facilities. We will also be sending messages to patients to prepare them for upcoming lab visits and encouraging them to make appointments. More phlebotomists will be joining staff at our busiest labs, as well.

We ask for your understanding as we implement a more seamless experience for patients, and that you continue informing and educating patients whenever possible.

“Speak to Safety”

Southcoast Health has met or exceeded [Massachusetts guidelines](#) to provide clinical care services aligned with the phases of the Reopening Massachusetts plan. Providing safe, exceptional care is our top priority.

The Southcoast Health Safety Pledge

Every employee should know our commitment to patients, visitors and each other. We are each responsible for understanding the importance of, and being able to communicate, the safety standards we have in place and why:

- ✓ Separating patients with suspected and confirmed COVID-19 from other patients
 - ✓ Personal Protective Equipment for all staff in accordance with CDC/DPH guidelines
 - ✓ Mandatory masking/face coverings for all staff and patients
 - ✓ Strict social distancing requirements – every 6 feet wherever possible
 - ✓ Screening of all staff, patients and escorts
 - ✓ Rigorous cleaning and disinfection protocols between patients and every 2 hours
 - ✓ Clean air filtration systems in our hospitals and facilities
 - ✓ Testing all patients admitted to our hospitals for COVID-19
 - ✓ [Restricting visitors](#) and companions, to limit possible exposures
 - ✓ [Telehealth](#) options available and scheduled when appropriate
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VIDEO: Thank you to our community



As our community continues to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and resume services for all patients, Southcoast thanks all residents, businesses, fellow not-for-profits, our local delegation and elected officials across the region for their support during this public health crisis.

To thank the community for their generosity, [#SouthcoastFrontlines](#) providers and employees throughout the system share their gratitude and emphasize vigilance in [this video](#).

Recommended reading

Dr. Michael Barretti tells his story to the *Standard-Times*.

Read “‘Getting sick myself really brought it home’: St. Luke’s ICU medical director shares personal experience with COVID-19” at [SouthCoastToday.com](#).

Status report: COVID-19 cases

The most recent COVID-19 report is [here](#).

Southcoast's dashboard of COVID-19 data, generated by Epic, is updated daily and [available on our intranet](#).

For the latest updates, guidance on PPE, video messages, employee assistance and more, please [visit the Southcoast intranet](#).

Questions? Please email them to faq@southcoast.org.

Thank you, and be well.